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NAZI WAR CRIMES DISCLOSURE ACT
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WEST GERMAN CRACKDOWN ON NAZIS

The recent capture in Argentina of former SS General Adolf Eichmann has stimulated the West German Government to arrest a number of former Nazis suspected of war crimes on the assumption that additional evidence necessary for convictions may become available during the trial of Eichmann in Israel. Those arrested include former SS General Wilhelm Koppe, charged with complicity in the death of some 300,000 inmates of the Chelmo concentration camp in Poland; Hermann Krumei, an Eichmann assistant; and Adolf Heinz Beckerle, Hitler's wartime representative in Sofia.



KOPPE



BECKERLE

Bonn inherited from the Allies responsibility for the prosecution of war criminals with the assumption of sovereignty in 1955. In 1958 the West German states set up a central office for tracking down war criminals, mainly through an examination of Nazi records. Approximately 1,200 persons are under investigation or have been arrested. The process has been speeded up since 1958 because the statute of limitations runs out during 1960 for all crimes except murder. The arrests have evoked bitter protests in nationalist and neo-Nazi quarters

but are firmly supported by the major political parties and the press.

In recent moves against neo-Nazi groups, the Socialist-controlled state government of Hesse has seized records, including membership and periodical subscription lists, from a major neo-Nazi center in Germany, the publishing house of the late extreme-rightist organizer, Karl Heinz Priester. The Hessian Interior Ministry prevented a meeting of the "Congress of West German and European Fascists," planned for 5 June in Wiesbaden, at which the numerous extreme rightist splinter groups reportedly planned to merge.

In another move, the federal Bundestag in early June approved a law banning the wearing of Nazi emblems and stiffening punishments for racial and neo-Nazi agitation. Wearing Nazi emblems, showing Nazi flags, or using Nazi slogans in public now can bring a sentence of up to three years, and racial or neo-Nazi agitation can be punished by three months to five years in prison.

Bonn is probably motivated by a desire to counter criticism abroad of laxity toward former Nazis, as well as by a sincere desire to bring serious offenders to justice. West Germans have generally viewed Eichmann's capture as evidence that "crime doesn't pay," and the press has welcomed the opportunity as another object lesson for German youths to learn of the horrors of the Nazi era. ~~(CONFIDENTIAL)~~

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